



Two “Axes” Converging in Iran

by Assaf Orion / Dec 23, 2024

Iran’s Middle East “axis of resistance” and the Eurasian axis it shares with China, Russia, and North Korea are increasingly challenging the global and regional order, highlighting the need for more partnerships and a comprehensive counterstrategy with special efforts focusing on Tehran.

When discussing foreign policy issues, international media frequently dwell on two “axes,” but separately: a Eurasian axis of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, and a Middle East “axis of resistance” led by Iran that includes Hezbollah in Lebanon; the Assad regime in Syria (until recently); Shia militias in Syria and Iraq; Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza and the West Bank; and the Houthis in Yemen. The fall of the Assad regime—following Israel’s military feats against Hamas and Hezbollah and its strikes on Iran—has brought the latter axis to a historic low and pushed Russia to withdraw at least some of its assets from Syria. It is prudent, however, to assume that Russia and Iran’s presence in Syria and the axis of resistance itself are down but not out.

Both axes are staunch U.S. adversaries, and while their members differ in means and motivations, they share revisionist ideologies that oppose the West and the rules-based world order led by the United States. The axis of resistance also seeks a new order in the Middle East centered on establishing Iranian/Shia hegemony, removing the United States from the region, and eliminating Israel. Iran is a key partner in both axes, with ambitions that go beyond the Middle East and include nuclear weapons. Oil exports to China have been helping Russia and Iran weather Western sanctions, allowing Tehran to generate more than \$50 billion per year, up to half of which is funding the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

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